

STRONGER TOGETHER

A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES | Vol. 42 | Issue Two 2025



EMBRACING MINISTRY

STRONGER TOGETHER

Issue 2
2025



ON THE COVER

There's room in ministry for everyone: you, your spouse, and each person in your congregation. And there are as many approaches to ministry as there are individuals. (See 1 Corinthians 12.) We should never underestimate the value of any ministry God empowers someone to do, from creating art or participating in corporate prayer to befriending absent members or baking doggie treats for neighborhood pups. In this issue, you'll find ideas for inclusive and edifying ministry.



SCAN TO READ ONLINE



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THE POWER OF WORKING TOGETHER IN MINISTRY



SCAN FOR AUDIO

DIFFERENT ROLES; POWERFUL INFLUENCE

MARY* NEVER STOOD IN THE PULPIT nor held an official title in her husband's church. But every Sabbath, she was there—welcoming members with a warm smile, quietly praying for the struggling families she had visited during the week, and ensuring every detail of the service ran smoothly.

Her husband, Pastor Daniel,* often reminded her, “We’re a team. Your role may look different from mine, but together, we’re stronger.” Mary knew this to be true. They worked side by side, complementing each other’s strengths. Daniel preached and led, and Mary nurtured relationships and built community.

One day, a young woman named Helen* approached her after church. “I’ve watched you and Pastor Daniel for months,” Helen said. “The way you work together inspires me. You never preach, but you live your sermons. Your kindness, your prayers, and the way you serve—it’s like watching God’s love in action.”

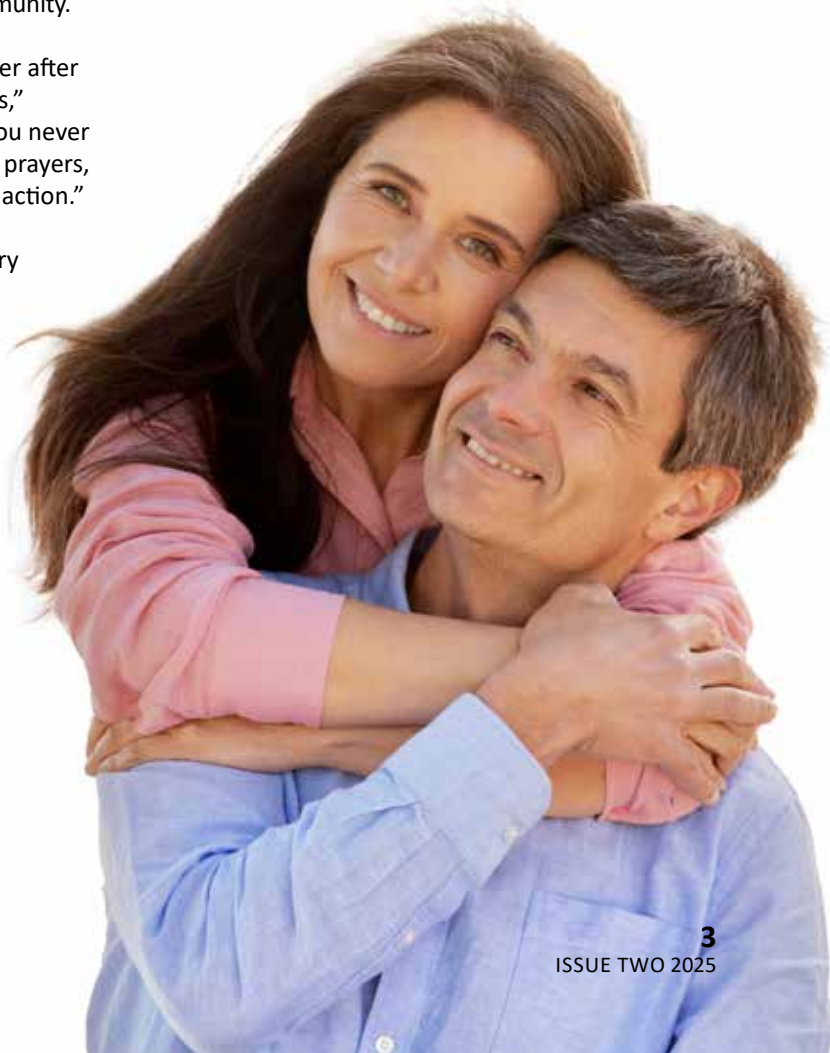
That moment affirmed what Mary had long felt: ministry wasn’t just about one person leading; it was about working together as a team. As Ecclesiastes 4:9 reminds us, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.” Inspired by Mary and Daniel’s journey, here are practical ideas for pastoral couples to work together and strengthen their ministry:

EMBRACE YOUR UNIQUE ROLE

Just as Mary complemented her husband’s leadership, pastoral spouses should focus on their strengths and how they can contribute uniquely. Romans 12:4, 5 reminds us, “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body.” Every role is essential, and working together magnifies the impact.

*Mary, Daniel, and Helen are pseudonyms.

We grow and improve through mutual support and encouragement.



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PRAY TOGETHER AS A TEAM

Mary and Daniel often prayed together, seeking God's guidance for their family and ministry. Philippians 2:2 calls us to be "like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." Prayer aligns your heart with God's purpose and strengthens your unity as a couple.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

While Daniel preached, Mary nurtured relationships. Working together, they created a supportive church family. Proverbs 27:17 teaches, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Collaborate to encourage and uplift your church members in practical ways, such as hosting small group gatherings or offering pastoral care. We grow and improve through mutual support and encouragement.

SHARE VISION

Mary and Daniel regularly discussed the vision for their ministry. Aligning on goals ensures a unified focus and inspires the congregation. Colossians 3:23 reminds us, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." A shared vision makes every effort purposeful and Christ-centered.

MODEL TEAMWORK FOR OTHERS

Mary and Daniel's partnership inspired Helen and others to see the beauty of working together. Genesis 2:18 highlights that God created us for companionship and partnership. The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." When pastoral couples unite, they model God's design and encourage their congregation to do the same.


BALANCE MINISTRY AND FAMILY LIFE

A strong ministry begins at home. Mary and Daniel made time for their family, recognizing its importance in sustaining their ministry. Ecclesiastes 4:12 reminds us, "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." When God is at the center, your family becomes a source of strength for your ministry.

CELEBRATE WINS TOGETHER

Whether it was a successful outreach program or a member's testimony, Mary and Daniel celebrated God's blessings together. Sharing these moments strengthens your bond and fuels your shared passion for ministry. As Philippians 2:4 urges, "Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

Mary's story is a testament to the power of teamwork in ministry. When pastoral couples work together, their combined strengths create a solid foundation for a thriving church. By supporting one another, sharing a common vision, and complementing each other's gifts, your ministry reflects God's design for unity and collaboration.

Ministry is not a solo journey—it's a partnership that glorifies God and transforms lives. Together, you can inspire your congregation, nurture your community, and leave a lasting impact on God's kingdom. 

Aurora Canals serves as associate ministerial secretary for pastoral spouses and families.



Special Quotes

by Ellen G. White

There should exist in the minister's family a unity that will preach an effectual sermon on practical godliness. As the minister and his wife faithfully do their duty in the home, restraining, correcting, advising, counseling, guiding, they are becoming better fitted to labor in the church, and are multiplying agencies for the accomplishment of God's work outside the home.

Gospel Workers, p. 204

The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 49

Parents who can be approached in no other way are frequently reached through their children. Sabbath school teachers can instruct the children in the truth, and they will, in turn, take it into the home circle.

Counsels on Sabbath School Work, pp. 114, 115

In this closing work of the gospel there is a vast field to be occupied; and, more than ever before, the work is to enlist helpers from the common people. Both the youth and those older in years will be called from the field, from the vineyard, and from the workshop, and sent forth by the Master to give His message.

A Call to Stand Apart, p. 66

The church of Christ is organized for service. Its watchword is ministry. Its members are soldiers, to be trained for conflict under the Captain of their salvation. Christian ministers, physicians, teachers, have a broader work than many have recognized. They are not only to minister to the people, but to teach them to minister. They should not only give instruction in right principles, but educate their hearers to impart these principles. Truth that is not lived, that is not imparted, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue. Its blessing can be retained only as it is shared.

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 148, 149

Let none pass by little opportunities, to look for larger work. You might do successfully the small work, but fail utterly in attempting the larger work, and fall into discouragement. It is by doing with your might what you find to do that you will develop aptitude for larger work. It is by slighting the daily opportunities, by neglecting the little things right at hand, that so many become fruitless and withered.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 153



Long has God waited for the spirit of service to take possession of the whole church so that everyone shall be working for Him according to his ability. When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 111

There are many things that persons may do if they only have a mind to work. There are many who will not go to church to hear the truth preached. By personal efforts in simplicity and wisdom these might be persuaded to turn their feet to the house of God. Conviction may fasten upon their minds the first time they hear a discourse upon present truth. Should your solicitations be refused, do not be discouraged. Persevere till success crowns your efforts.

Christian Service, p. 130

God has given to "every man his work." He has not left the spiritual interests of the church wholly in the hands of the minister. It is not for the good of the minister, nor for the good of the individual members of the church, that the minister should undertake exclusive charge of the Lord's heritage. Each member of the church has a part to act in order that the body may be preserved in a healthful condition. We are all members of the same body, and each member must act a part for the benefit of all the others. All members have not the same office. As the members of our natural body are directed by the head, so as members of the spiritual body we should submit ourselves to the direction of Christ, the living head of the church.

From the Heart, p. 163

MARRIED TO A PASTOR?
Discover a safe place to fellowship, ask questions, and learn from others on social media!

DISCUSS SHARE CONNECT

Official groups for ministry spouses online:

f ministerialspouses @ministryspouses @gc_ministerial_spouses

NEW <https://www.facebook.com/groups/esposasministeriales/>





SCAN FOR AUDIO

A young girl with long, wavy brown hair is shown in profile, singing into a black microphone. She is wearing a grey zip-up jacket over a black top. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a church service setting.

SIMPLE WAYS TO **INVOLVE CHILDREN AND TEENS IN** CHURCH SERVICES

PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Simple Ways to Involve Children and Teens in Church Services

INCLUDING ALL AGES IN THE WORSHIP service helps churches begin to grow. Grandchildren want to come to church with their grandparents. People who quit attending come back and bring their children. People are happier inviting their friends to church, especially those with families and children.

This refreshing approach to church worship aims to create services that involve, engage, and inspire every person in the congregation. The different generations learn to treasure and respect each other. There is more joy and less isolation in church. Here are some ways to include children and teens in your church services.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

- Teach children how to pray simple prayers for other people in the congregation. Invite those who would like the children to pray for them to put up their hands. The children can go to those people, ask for their requests, and then pray short prayers for them.
- Invite children to learn sign language to illustrate the Lord's Prayer and then perform it or teach it to the rest of the church.



- Print off the following words on different colors of paper and cut them apart:
 - Yellow paper: Praise
 - Blue paper: Sorry
 - Green paper: Thanks
 - Pink paper: PleaseStick one of these four words onto a gift bag the same color as the paper. Place these at the front of the church. Give four small pieces of paper (one in each color—yellow, blue, green, and pink) to each person in the congregation. Invite them to write a praise prayer on their yellow paper, a request on the pink paper, and so on. Invite the children to collect the colored papers and place them in the matching bags. Pick up one bag at a time and present it to God as a congregational prayer. Then pull out a few of the papers from each bag and read them aloud prayerfully. (You do not need to read aloud any confessions from the bag marked Sorry.)
- Pray a pray-dough prayer of confession. Give each person a piece of white modeling dough and invite them to make something that represents a struggle they've been having. As the congregation works with their clay, pray each person present receives God's wisdom and power. Claim His promises of peace, healing, protection, and strength. Ask them to shape the dough into a pure, white heart that they can take home with them. And as they do, praise God for keeping His promises. Thank Him for giving each person exactly what they need at just the right time.

*There is more joy
and less isolation
in church.*

- Place a branch in a pot to make a “tree.” Give out green card leaves with a hole punched in one end and a loop of yarn for hanging. Write the names of people who need healing on the leaves. Hang the prayer request leaves on the tree. Leave the tree in the church as a prayer reminder. When healing takes place, stick a colored paper flower onto the leaf. If someone dies, attach a white flower to their leaf.

For more intergenerational prayer ideas, see *100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids: And Grown Ups Too!* by Karen Holford.

SCRIPTURE READING

- Mentor a child or young person by discussing the Bible reading with them ahead of time. Explore different ways to present the scripture to the church, with actions, pictures, background music, or a group of people reading different voices in the passage.
- Ask children to perform a silent action each time certain words in the scripture are read, such as pointing to heaven when God is mentioned or making a heart shape with their hands to represent love.
- Older children could research the context of the passage and say a few words about the background of the verses before reading the scripture.
- Choose several teens and give each of them a verse from a multi-verse scripture reading. Ask them to illustrate their assigned verse in any way they like—such as a photo, some abstract art, or a painting. Photograph their work and use the pictures to create a slide deck to show while the scripture is read.
- Invite children to hunt around the church for the words or verses of a Bible reading printed on large sheets of paper. Arrange the children to show the passage to the congregation correctly. Ask a teen to read the scripture aloud to the congregation.

For more ideas on including children in Bible readings, see *100 Creative Ways to Learn Memory Verses* by Karen Holford.

THE OFFERING

- Young children can learn how to collect an offering. A supportive and helpful deacon can stand nearby if necessary. Children feel valuable when we trust them with an important and responsible task.
- Collect the offering in attractive gift bags that the children have decorated. Use these to remind the congregation that everything we have is a gift from God, and we can show our appreciation by giving something back to Him.
- Use an interesting offering container for the children’s offerings. Collect their money when they come forward for a children’s story.
- Give children blank envelopes to color for adults to use for their offerings. Write the child’s name on the envelope so the adult can thank them.
- Collect a special offering each month to support a children’s project in your church, such as Vacation Bible School or a special item for their Sabbath School rooms.



Simple Ways to Involve Children and Teens in Church Services

YOUR CHURCH'S WELCOME AND BLESSINGS


- Train children to be welcomers. They can smile, greet people, and give out bulletins and Bibles.
- Train older children to welcome the children who come to church. They can give them children's bulletins or sermon-related worksheets to encourage them to listen to the morning's message.
- Pair school-age children with a senior member of the church. Give them the responsibility of welcoming an "adopted" grandparent to church each week.
- If your church serves drinks or snacks, involve older children and teens in serving and tidying up afterward.
- Invite friendly teenagers to say goodbye to the children after the service and bless them with encouragement and appreciation.

THE SERMON

- Tell the children's story during the sermon to break up the long sermon and give them something to look forward to.
- Be creative about involving the children in the sermon. One pastor places a surprise object in a special bag that he takes to church each week. The children can't wait to help him open the bag during the sermon! The object helps the children learn how much God loves them.
- Ask a teacher to involve the children in a science or nature experiment that illustrates the sermon.

- Give each child a small ball of clay or modeling dough. Invite them to create something connected to the sermon. Display the models after the service and encourage adults to ask the children about their experience.
- Dress children as characters from your Bible story and involve them in telling the sermon. Provide cards with words for them to read aloud at the appropriate moments.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

- Invite teens to design your bulletin cover and ask children to create special designs to suit specific sermon topics.
- Children can make cards to send to people who haven't come to church for a while. Give them plain white postcards to decorate with drawings and Bible verses.
- Children and teens can create inspiring calendars of decorated Bible verses. These can be commercially printed and sold to raise funds.
- Children listen better when they have something to do. Ask them to draw a picture that illustrates a message from the sermon. After the service, place their drawings on a bulletin board to inspire others with their thoughts.
- Choose a gifted adult to mentor the creative talents of the children and youth in your church. Art can be used to deepen their spiritual understanding and experience. They can design scripture bookmarks, T-shirts, greeting cards, and banners. 

Children feel valuable when we trust them with an important and responsible task.

Karen Holford is a family therapist and departmental director at the Trans-European Division. She has been married to Pastor Bernie Holford for more than 40 years. The ideas in this article have been adapted from her book Altogether Wonderful: Exploring Intergenerational Worship.





SCAN FOR AUDIO



FINDING OUR NICHES IN MINISTRY

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

SINCE CHILDHOOD, I HAVE SENSED the calling to be a missionary and a pastor's wife. Little did I know that the high calling of being a pastor's spouse comes with high expectations. Under the veneer of strength that pastors project, the weight of pastoral responsibility often goes unnoticed. As ministerial spouses, we stand alongside them, supporting them in this calling. Much of our ministry is our personal care and loving support of our spouse. It begins with praying for them daily, asking God to continue to shape them into the kind of spiritual leader He wants them to be.

The other parts of our ministry are to our family, friends, church, and community. That's a lot to handle on our own, wouldn't you say? But we don't have to do it alone. Jesus, the Lover of our souls, will equip us and show us the service He has prepared for us beforehand (Ephesians 2:10).

At the feet of Jesus, we are filled with His Spirit and can hear what is in His heart. In Ephesians 6:18, He urges us to remain alert and persistent in our prayers because prayer not only blesses us but also gives us a way to serve Him. Our time of prayer also opens the door for us to ask the Holy Spirit to help us find creative ways to connect with our community.

Much of our ministry is our personal care and loving support of our spouse.



MY DOGGIE TREAT MINISTRY

When settling into our new home, I prayed that the Lord would provide opportunities to serve our neighbors. As I spent many hours a day replanting our “new” flower garden, the Lord began to answer my prayers. Our house is on the corner of an intersection where I see people walk their dogs every day. So I started my dog-owner ministry! I offered treats to every puppy that passed by. The dogs obviously loved me, and they pulled their owners into our driveway every time they passed our house. This naturally provided opportunities for longer and deeper conversations, and long-term relationships began to form.

Over the past eight years, I’ve had the opportunity to prepare meals for neighbors when they are ill and bake treats for them during the holidays. In this way I have been able to share the love of Jesus with them. Now these neighbors talk about the struggles in their personal lives and ask for prayer.

THE POWER OF PRESENCE

We can connect with others by calling, texting, and sending cards to those who are ill, bereaved, or celebrating a special occasion. To support and comfort those going through difficult times, we can cook meals, buy groceries, or send flowers as an expression of caring love for them. In Matthew 25:36, Jesus says that by caring for the sick, the hungry, and the needy, we are essentially caring for Him.




JESUS’ MINISTRY

Jesus was a friendly “sidewalk servant.” He smiled and spoke to everyone who passed by. He loved children and their pets. People were drawn to Him. His warm smile and welcoming words brought joy, peace, comfort, and hope to those who encountered Him. And today He will do that through you!

FIND YOUR MINISTRY NICHES

Find your place in ministry, whether encouraging parents in your church or neighborhood, visiting the homebound, or connecting with people through shared interests and gifts. What is your niche? Identify the needs of your community, your church, or your children’s school. Could you:

- Begin a prayer ministry?
- Turn your hobbies into ministry?

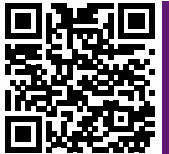
Ministries that bless a community are often the result of conversations in which we listen to and share with people. Let’s pray that whenever we speak, God will give us the right words to speak boldly for Him (Ephesians 6:19). 

Angelina Wood has served in many ministries over the past 41 years, as an educator, administrator, and conference department director. She and her husband currently serve in a variety of roles in the North American Division. She enjoys gardening, entertaining, and spending time with her husband.

Ministries that bless a community are often the result of conversations in which we listen to and share with people.

LET'S ALL STAND UP FOR STANDING UP

SIT LESS; MOVE MORE



SCAN FOR AUDIO



Let's All Stand Up for Standing Up

IMAGINE YOU'VE PREPARED YOUR TOPIC thoroughly and made it as interesting as possible. However, when you were well into your presentation, you noticed decreased attention and visual engagement with your listeners. In fact, most of them were asleep! What's going on?

PROLONGED SITTING HURTS

For years we had been taught that a total of sixty minutes or so of intense exercise three times a week was the ideal for good health and longevity. Now studies show that sitting for a long time or lying down for prolonged inactive hours can be as harmful to the body as smoking. Uninterrupted sitting for six hours or more a day raises your health risks regardless of how hard you exercise before or afterward.

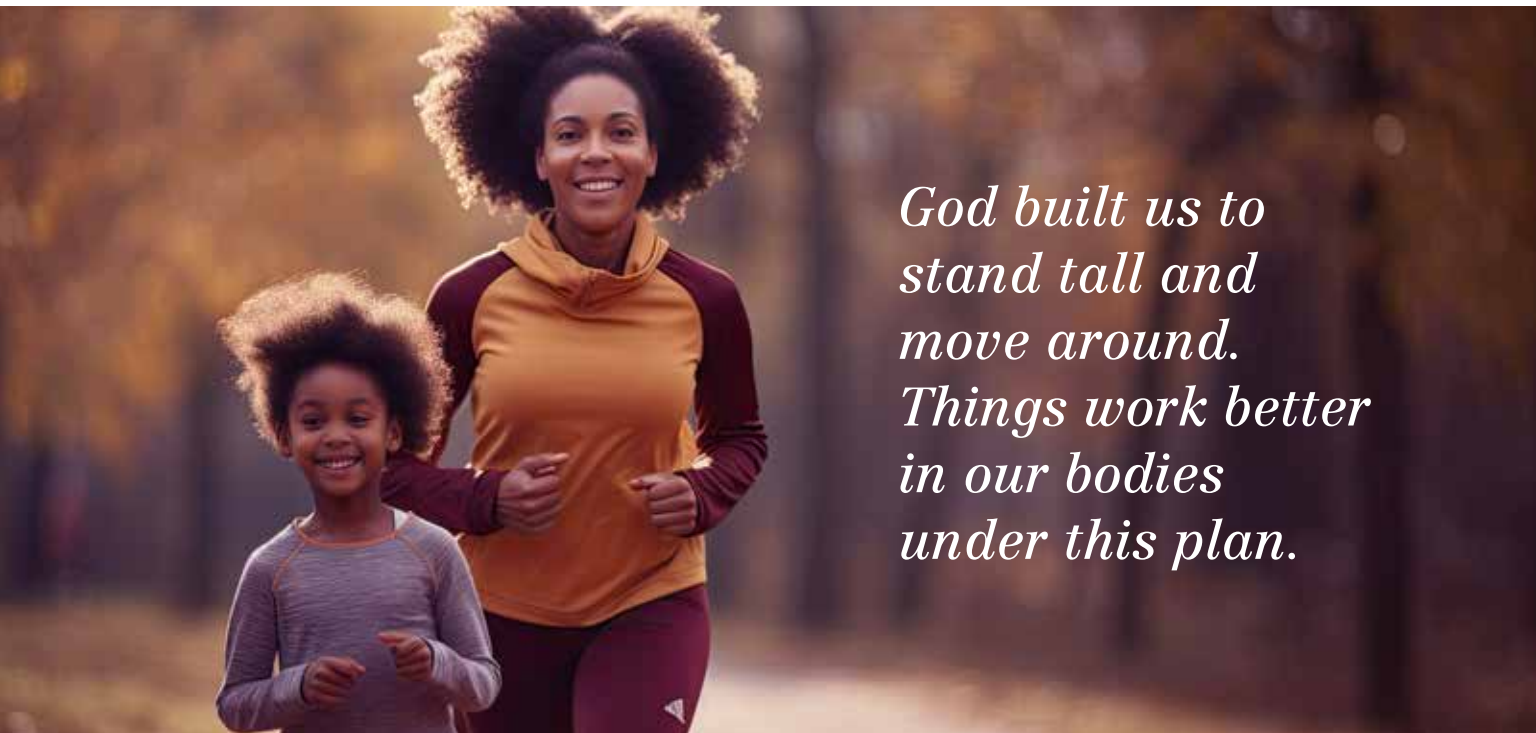
MADE TO MOVE

God built us to stand tall and move around. Things work better in our bodies under this plan. For instance:

- The cardiovascular and pulmonary systems, designed to move life-sustaining oxygen and blood about the body, work more efficiently when the body is upright. Prolonged periods of inactivity can significantly raise the risk of heart attack and stroke over time.

- Our digestive and bowel systems also function more normally when we stand and move. Long hours of no physical movement can significantly slow these processes, causing unpleasant side effects such as heartburn, constipation, gas, and bloating.
- The large leg and gluteal muscles—important for stabilizing our gait and posture—can weaken and waste away by hours of sitting, increasing our fall risk.
- Muscle movement aids the body in digesting the fats and sugars we eat. Prolonged periods of inactivity result in a less-than-optimum digestion process, causing our bodies to retain and store fats and sugars as body fat.
- Even if we exercise strenuously but still spend a large amount of time sitting without breaks for stretching and movement, we increase our risk of metabolic syndrome, a group of risk factors that raise the risk of diabetes and heart disease.*

*The five conditions of metabolic syndrome are obesity, high blood pressure, high blood triglycerides, insulin resistance, and low levels of HDL (the "good" cholesterol).



God built us to stand tall and move around. Things work better in our bodies under this plan.

Uninterrupted sitting for six hours or more a day raises your health risks regardless of how hard you exercise before or afterward.

- The hips and back weaken, and we lose the ability to effectively support ourselves when we sit hunched over for a long time. The hip flexor muscles shorten, causing increasing problems with the hip joints. Back problems can increase due to poor posture, leading to the risk of compression of the discs in the spine and painful premature spinal degeneration.
- People who sit for hours risk missing out on the mood-enhancing, positive, feel-good effects of physical activity and fitness.
- There is suspicion that the risk of some types of cancer may increase due to habits of prolonged inactivity—cancers affecting the lungs, breasts, and uterine and colon systems.
- Research suggests that people who spend more time sitting have a higher risk of developing diabetes due to the increased insulin resistance in the body.
- Long periods of inactivity can lead to varicose or spider veins from blood pooling in the legs. A long plane or car trip can increase the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT), commonly known as a blood clot in the leg. A pulmonary embolism—a life-threatening medical emergency—happens if part of the clot breaks off and lodges in the lungs.
- Hunching over a computer keyboard for hours at a time can result in pain and stiffness in the neck and shoulders and, over time, can affect posture.
- Studies indicate that over the past couple of decades, while we have become increasingly tethered to our computers, smartphones, and digital devices, our attention spans have shrunk in measurable ways. Our ability to concentrate has also suffered as we engage more and more in the stress of rapid multitasking. This may explain why audiences find it challenging to stay engaged and mentally focused while sitting through a prolonged presentation. Concentration wanes, the thoughts wander, and drowsiness can set in. Studies show that shorter presentations have a better effect on mental engagement and memory retention.

HOW TO SIT LESS

Replacing just thirty minutes of sitting each day with light physical activity may be enough to significantly decrease overall mortality rates. So, how can we do this?

At Home

- While cleaning up, put things away in small trips rather than doing it all in one trip.
- While watching TV, set a timer to remind you to get up and move.
- Walk around while talking on the phone.
- Stand up when ironing.
- Instead of sitting down to read, listen to audiobooks while you take care of home tasks or work in the garden.
- Park farther away when shopping and enjoy walking more steps to your destination.

“The human body simply isn’t built to sit for long periods of time. A hundred years ago, when we were all out toiling in the fields and factories, obesity was basically nonexistent. But since we can’t exactly run free in the fields until the end of our days, we have to help our bodies in other ways. We have to stand up for our right to stand up.”

—Jolie O’Dell in *Sitting Is Killing You: The Truth About Sitting Down*

At Work

- Stand up while reading emails and reports or catching up on your phone.
- Move your trash bin away from your desk so you will have to stand up and walk to it to throw anything away.
- Walk around the room when engaged in phone or conference conversations.
- Set a timer to remind yourself to take water and bathroom breaks.
- Resist the elevator and take the stairs instead.
- During lunch breaks, walk briskly outside and enjoy your sandwich in the sunshine and fresh air.

SUMMARY

- Sitting or lying down for long periods increases your risk of chronic health problems. Less sitting and more moving contribute to better health, especially as you age.
- Too much sitting can harm mental function and health, causing poor mood, increased stress, and decreased sleep quality.
- Try to take a break from sitting every thirty minutes or so. Set a timer.
- Being more active is not as hard as you might think. There are many simple ways to include some physical movement in your day. 📌

RESOURCES:

<https://www.quotegarden.com/sitting-standing.html>

<https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/ss/slideshow-sitting-health>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/the-dangers-of-sitting>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6082791/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30905483/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005>

Koniver, Laura. “Prolonged Sitting Is Bad for Us.” *MaryJane’s Farm*. October/November 2024, 43.

Rae Lee Cooper is a registered nurse. She and her husband, Lowell, have two adult married children and three adorable grandchildren. She spent most of her childhood in the Far East and then worked as a missionary with her husband in India for 16 years. She enjoys music, creative arts, cooking, and reading.



LITTLE TIME, LOTS OF LOVE

BUILDING CONNECTION WITH BRIEF MOMENTS



SCAN FOR AUDIO



PETER FRAENKEL WORKED as a marriage and family therapist in downtown New York. Day after day he saw distressed couples who worked very long hours. They were bickering, not communicating well, and not spending much time together. As he listened to the couples, he noticed a pattern. The less time they spent together, the less warm, close, and loved they felt. They started to feel anxious about the well-being of their relationship, and this made them feel grumpy and argumentative.

TEN SIMPLE CONNECTIONS

Fraenkel realized that their lifestyles often had irregular schedules, heavy stress loads, and long hours or days away from each other. He came up with a very simple idea that can also be a blessing for ministerial couples and families. He discovered that if couples connected for sixty-second caring interactions ten times a day, with the loving moments scattered from morning until night, they could keep their love fueled and alive.

It only takes about ten minutes a day to nurture warm connections. The best way to scatter these loving moments throughout the day is to have two in the morning, one when you lovingly part for work, one when you reunite in the evening, two before bedtime, and the rest scattered throughout the day.¹

However busy you are, you can probably spend ten minutes connecting with those you love, whether it's your spouse, kids, or special friends. Each time we connect warmly, a burst of oxytocin hormone showers our brain, helping us to feel loved, loving, and happy. Making time for regular brief connections helps us feel connected all day long.

SPIRITUAL CONNECTION FIRST

Another way of using Fraenkel's idea to bless your life is by connecting with God for at least one minute every hour. Of course, it's good to spend focused time with God for more than one minute. But we can also pause each hour to be filled with His love for us, to pray for help, to thank Him for the gifts of the past hour, and to be filled with wonder at something He has made. The more often we connect with God, the stronger our love connection with Him, and the easier it is for us to pause and love others.



*It only takes
about ten
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nurture warm
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Love flourishes when it's watered regularly, especially when it is drip-fed.

A SIMPLE PRESCRIPTION FOR LOVE

Love flourishes when it's watered regularly, especially when it is drip-fed. This keeps the plant of love alive much better than an annual soaking. Our human relationships are one of the most significant investments in our lives. The more we invest in our relationship, the more likely we are to be happy and the less likely we are to have conflicts. A little warm and intentional effort can go a very long way.

ONE-MINUTE CONNECTIONS

Some of these ideas focus on loving moments with your spouse but can be adapted for children. The more often your child experiences a love connection, the easier it is for them to manage their behavior.

Give focused attention.

- Share the happiest moment in your day.
- Listen attentively as the other person shares the happiest moment in their day.
- Gaze into each other's eyes for a minute.
- Run into each other's arms when you meet.

Appreciate each other.

(Appreciation lowers conflicts!)

- Tell them, "I really appreciate you because . . ."
- Say, "Thank you so much for doing . . ."
- Tuck notes in their lunch box, send a text message, and surprise them with a small gift or a flower.

Convey how precious they are to you.

- Verbally express that you value them:
 - "I'm so glad that you are in my life!"
 - "Being your partner gives me so much joy!"
 - "You are the best thing that ever happened to me!"
- Create photos, gifts, and other tangible signs to show that you value your relationship.
- Celebrate their special moments!

Be kind.

- Do small, kind things for the other person as often as possible.
- Offer water, juice, fruit tea, treats, smiles, hand massage—whatever they enjoy.
- Say, "When you did . . . that was so kind! Thank you!"
- Tell them, "The affection I enjoy the most is . . ." (for example, hugs, kind words, thoughtful gifts, caring acts, or special time together).

Offer help.

- Anticipate when help is needed.
- Be ready and willing to help cheerfully.
- Clear the table, put things away, and take laundry to the bedroom.
- Each time you leave a room, do one thing to make it tidier.

Laugh together.

- Watch a funny social media clip—animals can be crazy!
- Buy amusing cards for each other—or photograph them in the shop.
- Play hide and seek. Have a lingering kiss when you find each other.
- Take turns naming an animal and then kissing each other as if you were that animal (for example, monkeys, lions, crocodiles, butterflies, giraffes).
- Explore *Minute to Win It* games on the internet for quick and funny challenges.

Soothe each other.

- Make time for a lingering hug or kiss.
- Rub your partner or child's back.
- Light a candle together.
- Share a chocolate and see who can make their piece last the longest.
- Hold hands and pray silently for each other.
- Know what comforts each other (hugs, talking, favorite food, walks, fun, distractions).
- Make their favorite drink or food and enjoy it with them.

Express joy.

- Sing loudly to a lively song.
- Celebrate something—anything!
- Give your partner an imaginary award for something they do well.
- Share a happy memory or exchange a happy photo in your messaging system.

Share wonder.

- Name star constellations or gaze at the moon.
- Find something in nature that fills you with wonder and show it to each other.
- Watch a short nature video clip of a sea otter, dolphin, or butterfly.
- Drive to a viewpoint and watch the sunset.

Make a one-minute love kit.

Include your favorite ways to make special moments with your spouse. You may also adapt these ideas for use with your children.

- Candles and matches
- Prayer journal and pen
- Special chocolates or dried fruits
- Hot chocolate packets or herb teas
- Massage oil or perfumes
- Sticky notes
- Bubble wand and solution
- Book of love quotes
- Bible with bookmarks at your favorite texts
- Favorite treats
- Funny cartoons or greeting cards that make you smile
- Paper and pens for special messages
- Playlist of favorite music
- Couple question card set—or write your own questions
- A word puzzle or game you enjoy
- Cookie baking kit



¹ Fraenkel, Peter. "Time and Couples, Part II: The Sixty-Second Pleasure Point." *101 More Interventions in Family Therapy*. Edited by T.S. Nelson & T. S. Trepper. New York: The Haworth Press, 1998.

Karen Holford works for the Trans-European Division, which means she travels many days a year. She connects with her pastor-husband through shared online devotions, prayer, text messages, and enjoying a treat over Zoom each evening as they talk about their day.

A little warm and intentional effort can go a very long way.



NURTURE, RETENTION, RECLAMATION

CAN YOU HEAR THEIR CRY?



SCAN FOR AUDIO



AS VITAL AS THEY ARE, church outreach events and activities are not enough to keep members. We must nurture one other—especially new members—and reclaim people who have stopped attending. We can do this by creating passionate disciples of Christ who cultivate relationships and point others to the One who transforms lives.

Ellen White posits that “those who have newly come to the faith should be patiently and tenderly dealt with, and it is the duty of the older members of the church to devise ways and means to provide help and sympathy and instruction for those who have conscientiously withdrawn from other churches for the truth’s sake, and thus cut themselves off from the pastoral labor to which they have been accustomed. The church has a special responsibility laid upon her to attend to these souls who have followed the first rays of light they have received; and if the members of the church neglect this duty, they will be unfaithful to the trust that God has given them” (*Evangelism*, p. 351).

ATTENTIVE LISTENING AND CARE

If we listen, we can hear the cry for nurture from the brothers and sisters in our churches. This cry—and the even louder cry of those who have left—must be heard. Here are some ways we can listen and respond with love.

Plan spiritually, lovingly, sensitively, and practically for the return of former attendees and members.

One of the most damning statements I ever read from Ellen White is this: “I am sorry that there are those in positions of trust who very sparingly cultivate the sympathy and tenderness of Christ. They do not even cultivate and manifest love toward their brethren and sisters who are in the faith. They do not exercise the precious tact that should bind and heal those who go astray, but instead they exhibit cruelty of spirit, that drives the wanderer still further into the dark, and makes angels weep. Some seem to find a sort of pleasure in bruising and wounding souls who are ready to die. As I look upon men who handle sacred truth, who bear sacred responsibilities, and who are failing to cultivate a spirit of love and tenderness, I feel like crying out, ‘Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?’” (Letter 43, June 14, 1985, to J. H. Kellogg).



If we listen, we can hear the cry for nurture from the brothers and sisters in our churches. The same cry—and even louder, from those who have left—must be heard.

Understand that nurture, reconciliation, and reclamation do not happen overnight.

It is a Holy Spirit-led process that takes time and much human investment. We must give priority to the needs of others over our own real or perceived challenges. Investments in people cannot be measured in monetary terms.

Go through a planned cathartic process of dealing with conflict resolution.

The church should establish a robust structure for reconciliation when quarrels, disputes, friction, and discord arise. Of those who left the Adventist Church, 62.12 percent said that the primary trigger for leaving was conflict-related, 31.6 percent said conflict was their secondary trigger, and 32.87 percent said it was their tertiary trigger.¹ Based upon hard evidence, it makes sense to offer a robust conflict resolution program in each congregation, or at least provide accessibility to such expertise.

Cultivate a revolutionary prayer and fasting culture in the congregation.

Not just prayer, but intercessory prayer—agonizing, self-deprecatory prayer. Joel 2:17 tells us: “Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, ‘Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations.’” The real strength of any congregation is the participation and predominance of prayer.

Establish a ministry of reconciliation in every congregation.

God has given the church a message and ministry of reconciliation: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19; see also Ephesians 4:29–32). There is a great cry in our congregations for such an innovative ministry—so do it.

A values-led ethic and ministry should define the very core of our churches.

In *Values-Led Lives*, Llewellyn Edwards posits that love is the highest value and that we should be creative and practice abundant, wasteful, indiscriminate, and excessive love.² A values-led church would seek to place the needs of people high on the agenda. Such a church would take offense at the creation of hoops for people to jump through to experience the grace of God.




Some seem to find a sort of pleasure in bruising and wounding souls who are ready to die.

Develop a model of discipleship that focuses on one person or family at a time.

Sam Neves identifies six principles of discipleship in a postmodern context: identify a disciple within an existential crisis; establish a spiritual gifts model for the team; instigate a trail of discovery of God’s purpose for each disciple; offer a choice of world views and guide a disciple to experience the reality of the great controversy; and train a disciple to rescue others.³ Whether you subscribe to this model or not, we should be intentional in working with individuals and families to model discipling as a very positive, involved, and spiritual experience.

MY STORY

I gave my life to Christ when I was about 15 years old and never missed a service. I attended every church program and found my church to be quite loving and caring. One Sabbath morning, about a year and a half after my baptism, I decided not to go to church. I was not sick but discouraged, so I decided to sleep instead. About two o’clock that Sabbath afternoon, I heard my name being called. I will never forget what I saw when I looked out the window. The men of the church—very concerned about my absence—had come to visit me. I never missed another service again.

I can point back to that event as the one that opened my eyes to the fact that church should be about companionship. People are looking for a connection between words, actions, and deeds. They’re looking for love, care, and nurture.⁴ Will they find it in your congregation? 

¹ “Adventist Survey of Why People Leave the Church,” Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

² Llewellyn Edwards, *Values-Led Lives: The Way Jesus Wants Us to Think and Act* (Grantham, England: The Stanborough Press Ltd., 2017), 25.

³ Sam Neves, “The Matrix Model of Adventist Discipleship,” in *Narrative Meaning and Truth: Fulfilling the Mission in Relativistic Contexts*, 2nd ed., ed. Bruce A. Bauer and Kleber D. Gonçalves (Washington DC: Global Mission Center, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2017), 162, 163.

⁴ Adrian Peck, *Being Church: Missional, Accessible, and Engaging* (Grantham, UK: The Stanborough Press Ltd., 2017), 126.

Excerpted from an article that originally appeared in Ministry Magazine in April 2019.

Kirk Thomas serves on the British Union Conference executive committee.





SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

FIVE SIMPLE STEPS FOR YOUR CHURCH


DORCAS RECOGNIZED A NEED in Joppa and, because of her love for Jesus, realized that she must do something about it. “She was a worthy disciple of Jesus, and her life was filled with acts of kindness. She knew who needed comfortable clothing and who needed sympathy, and she freely ministered to the poor and the sorrowful” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 131).

Churches should seek every opportunity to engage with their communities. It might involve raising funds, writing grants, conducting research to find relevant information about the community they serve, and partnering with other community leaders for specific goals, such as fighting domestic violence, addiction, or illiteracy; offering job training and after-school tutoring; and providing sources of clean water.

FIVE STEPS

1. **Involve community members** as part of key decision-making processes. This builds mutual respect and trust and ensures your efforts are *with* the community, not *to* the community.
2. **Earn the right and privilege to share the gospel** by demonstrating your commitment in tangible ways.
3. **Address the most important issues facing the community** instead of simply doing what you want to do. Social engagement should be a community-based ministry of a missional church instead of a church-based program employed just to attract others.

4. **Maximize the participation and leadership** of the people living in the community. Social engagement does not focus on how we can attract people to what we are doing. Instead, it asks, What are the ways we need to change in order to engage those who do not consider church a part of their lives?
5. **Create critical service-learning opportunities** by involving students, teachers, churches, and community members. Through social innovation, participants will make a difference while learning and growing.

The church cannot be contained by its walls nor confined and limited to just a worship program. God summons all Christians to participate in His mission of salvation, promote restorative justice, and bring healing to the world. 

Excerpted from an article that originally appeared in Ministry Magazine in September 2022.

Sung Kwon is director of the master's in Leadership in Social Innovation program at Andrews University.

Bordes Henry Saturné is chair of the Leadership department at Andrews University.



SCAN FOR AUDIO

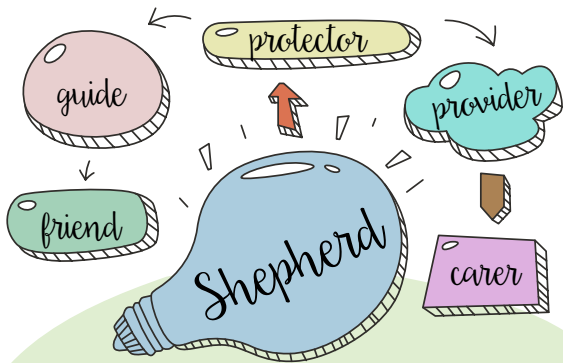


SCAN FOR AUDIO



UNI-VERSE EXPLORERS!

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN have adventures in God’s Word, even when you focus on just one verse? Grab your Bible, paper, notebook, index cards, and markers. Let’s explore together, one (uni) verse at a time!



MAPPING THE VERSE

Choose a Bible verse, such as one of the verses in Psalm 23. In a notebook or on an index card, create a diagram of what the verse means to you. For example, if you pick “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1), write the word *Shepherd* in the middle of the card or page. Around that central word, write what *Shepherd* means to you, such as *protector*, *carer*, *guide*, *provider*, *supporter*, *helper*, or *friend*. Next, around these words, write some of the ways God protects you, cares for you, guides you, and so on. This helps you to think more deeply about the verse and notice things you haven’t seen before.

WORD BY WORD ...

Choose a verse and write each significant word (or pair of words) on a different card or slip of paper. For example: Be – still – and know – that I – am God – Psalm 46:10. Arrange the words in the correct order to make the verse. Pick up one card at a time and write or draw any ideas that will help you understand the word better. Shuffle the cards and arrange them again in the correct order to help you memorize the verse.



JUST ONE WORD ...

Choose a Bible verse and write it on a small card. Think about the most important message in the verse and sum it up with only one word, like Hope, Peace, Forgiveness, Praise, or Wonder. Write your chosen word on the back of the verse card. Decorate the word in your favorite graphic style. Take this word with you throughout your day, and let it inspire and comfort you.



RE-WRITE

Read a verse carefully and slowly. You might like to read it in different Bible versions to help you understand it better. Then write the verse in your own words, applying it to your own life. Keep these verses in a notebook. Re-read them occasionally and see if you would change them again. Writing the verse in our own words can help us to think about the meaning more deeply.



PICTURE IT

Give each person a sheet of paper. Invite everyone to choose a favorite Bible verse that others might know and to illustrate it with a picture or a series of pictures, like a cartoon story. Show your pictures to each other and try to guess the verse that has been illustrated. Or make your own series of pictures into a little book. Write your ideas and thoughts about the verse on the back of the picture.

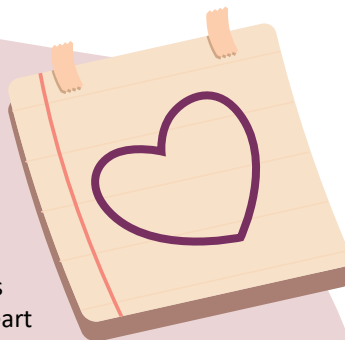


CRAFT A VERSE

Gather your craft materials or your construction toys. Choose a Bible verse that inspires you to make something. For example, you could make something to illustrate each of the verses in Psalm 23 using craft materials, toys, and things you can find in nature. You can work on this on your own and then show it to your family. Or each of you could illustrate one of the verses by making a scene or object. Why not photograph your creations, add the Bible verses, and share them with others?

LOVE STORY

The Bible is an amazing story of God's love! When we look closely, we can read the story of His love on every page. Choose a Bible verse. What does it tell you about God's love? Draw a heart on a piece of paper and write the Bible verse along the outside outline of the heart shape. Inside the heart, write what this verse helps you understand about God's wonderful love for you. Did you know that God's love for us is so amazing that we will spend eternity exploring it with Him and each other? And we can start that exploration right now!



CHAPTER AND VERSE

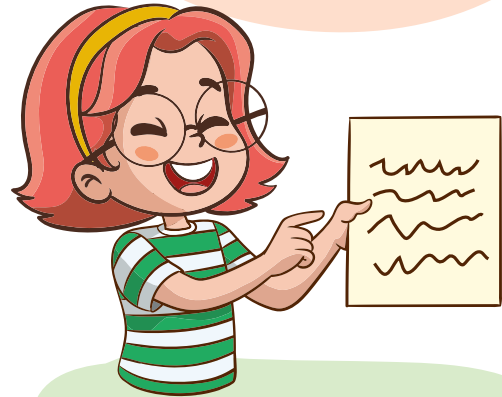


Whenever we read a verse in the Bible, it's good to read the whole chapter—and even some of the previous chapters. Reading around a verse helps us understand it better. Prayerfully read a whole chapter from one of the Gospels and then focus on one of the verses that inspires you. Choose one of the ideas in this feature to explore the inspiring verse.



PLAQUE

Choose a Bible verse that encourages you. Design a poster, picture, or plaque using that verse and decorate it in your favorite style. Place it where you will see it often. Or turn it into a keyring or something else you can carry wherever you go to remind you of God's loving care when you face challenges.



WISDOM FOR LIFE!

Solomon was one of the wisest men who ever lived. The book of Proverbs is filled with many wise and even funny verses! Choose one verse to discuss as a family. Wonder together what it meant in Solomon's day. Write out the verse from the Bible and then write at least one way in which the wisdom applies to your lives today. You can turn some of the verses into creative cartoons! Find your favorite way to explore the meaning of the many interesting verses.

WORDS OF LOVE

As you read the Bible, collect all the verses that describe God's love for you. Write them on index cards or the pages of a special notebook. Write the verse in the middle and give the page or card a title with one word that describes the love in the verse, such as *comforting*, *forgiving*, *patient*, or *kind*. Underneath the verse or on the back of the card, write about a time when you experienced God's love or the love of another human being in that amazing way. You can find verses about God's love in many places. Start by checking out Psalm 23, 103, 139, 145; 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 3; and 1 John 4.

Karen Holford has a special verse that encourages her every day: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). It reminds her that she can be at peace because God is always with her. He always does amazing things, even if she can't see them. What special verse will you choose to help you every day?

Northern Asia-Pacific Division

PAKISTAN UNION SECTION

Empowering Women for Ministry

The ministerial spouse certification program was conducted in Karachi and Lahore on November 30 and December 3, 2024, catering to more than 85 participants from both the Southern and Northern sections within the Pakistan Union Section territory. This impactful initiative was designed to equip pastors' wives with the tools and knowledge needed to serve more effectively in ministry.

The program featured dynamic and interactive seminars led by Raquel Arrais, Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) ministerial spouses association (MSA) coordinator, and Kyong Moon Kim, the Pakistan Union Section MSA coordinator. Their sessions provided practical insights, encouragement, and spiritual guidance tailored to the unique challenges faced by pastoral wives in their roles as ministry partners.



Jonas and Raquel Arrais, ministerial and ministerial spouse leaders for NSD, provided spiritual encouragement and practical instruction to more than 85 certification program participants from the Northern and Southern sections of the Pakistan Union Section.



Ruth Ashir, family ministries director for the Pakistan Union Section; Kyong Moon Kim, Pakistan Union Section leader for ministerial spouses; and Raquel Arrais, NSD ministerial spouse association leader, ministered to pastors' spouses.

Key topics addressed included effective communication, spiritual leadership, conflict resolution, and personal well-being. The training also emphasized the importance of creating supportive church environments and building relationships within local communities. Participants engaged actively in discussions and activities, making the sessions both lively and enriching.



Pastors' wives from the Southern Section of the Pakistan Union Section territory gathered in Karachi for a one-day certification program.

The certification program was more than just a training event; it was a platform for mutual encouragement and growth. Pastoral wives expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect with one another, share experiences, and gain valuable resources to strengthen their ministries.

"This initiative reflects the church's commitment to empowering women in ministry, recognizing their vital role in advancing the mission of the gospel. Through programs like these, the Pakistan Union Section continues to nurture leaders who are well-prepared to support and inspire others in their spiritual journeys," says Raquel Arrais.



Raquel Arrais (left), NSD MSA coordinator, spoke during ministerial spouse meetings in Pakistan.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD



Women gathered in Lahore for training and certification.



NSD raised funds to give 68 pastoral wives a gift of \$15.



Ministerial spouses from the Northern Section of the Pakistan Union Section territory hold certificates following special training in Lahore.



Pastoral spouses attending the Southern Section certification program received envelopes with a monetary gift.

SRI LANKA MISSION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Ministerial spouses in Sri Lanka received support, encouragement, and training through the ministerial spouse certification program.



Spouses in Northern Pakistan enjoyed a day of fellowship and spiritual guidance.



Pastoral spouses in Sri Lanka attended training meetings



Elders' wives in the Sri Lanka Mission received training and support during an all-day ministerial spouse certification program.



Pastoral wives in the Western India Union Section attended Shepherdess training.



Sri Lankan ministerial spouses visit while preparing a meal to share.

NORTHERN INDIA UNION SECTION

A Shepherdess convention was held October 28–30, 2024, in Kolkata, for the Northern India Union.

Southern Asia Division

WESTERN INDIA UNION SECTION

Shepherdess training and Impact 2025 meetings were held on August 12–13, 2024, in the Saurashtra Region in India.



Pastoral spouses gathered in Kolkata for a Shepherdess convention.

SAURASHTRA REGION OF SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION
PASTORS & SHEPHERDESS TRAINING
IMPACT - 2025

9-00 AM IST
 12 & 13-08-2024

Immaculate Servant Jagat
 Machi Bazar, New Vegetable Market Road,
 Near Civil Hospital Chowk, Rajkot.

Mrs. Krupa Victor Director Women's Ministries Shepherdess International Southern Asia Division	Pt. C.H. John Victor Ex. Secretary Southern Asia Division Pinar - Tamilnadu - India	Pt. Rakash Y. Charan Director Saurashtra Regl. SDA Rajkot - Gujarat	Mrs. Janet Chavan Coordinator Women's Ministries Shepherdess International Saurashtra Reg. SDA
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Brochures advertising the Shepherdess training were distributed in the Saurashtra Region.



Candidates gather for baptism at the Shepherdess meetings in Kolkata, India.

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